

Fowl Feathered Review

THE PAGE TURNED
BEFORE IT WAS WRITTEN.



THE RECORD
INDICATES
THE BIRD ARRIVED
BEFORE THE
FALL IN FALL

RECORD CORRUPTED:
THE CLIFF WAS
ADDED LATER.

THE BIRD
MAINTAINS POSITION.

RECIPIENT: SAME AS SENDER

No 252

PEPPER WAS HERE

ISSUE № 252: Accepted as Fragment,
Declared Sufficient



ABOUT THE ASSEMBLAGE (COLLECTED UNDER PRACTICAL CONDITIONS)

The FFR is no longer to be understood as a journal, nor as any prior category such as “Necrosign.” It is instead a distributed production practice: a gathering-method for the generation, capture, and long-

duration storage of emergent artifacts arising between human habit and mechanical repetition.

For ease of handling, we describe it as a shared frequency—commonly misidentified as the idle-pattern of a small automobile (late 20th-century compact class) standing in a parking lot at approximately 03:00—but this is merely the audible index-layer.

In its working state, the Assemblage conducts continuous retrieval from verifiable material domains: instruction sheets, retail surfaces, transit markings, service logs, and other document-objects of daily use. These are not preserved intact. They are subjected to pressure, displacement, and reclassification.

We do not curate in the modern sense. We maintain instead an **Offenrückraum** (open-back space), in which items may enter, settle, or misfile themselves.

Participants (hereafter: “important locals”) are those who exhibit **Dauerträgheit**—a useful persistence under minor strain. Fragility is not prohibited, but it is structurally unsupported.

Any submission that appears to strive toward “Art” in the self-declarative sense will be reassigned to a more stable function (e.g., table-leveling, draft-blocking, oil-absorption).



ON THE OPERATION OF SOURCE-ENGINES (ALWAYS IN PARTIAL MOTION)

The Assemblage employs several standing procedures, here summarized for clarity:

- **Warenregisterbruch (Arcade Index Condition)**
Fragments are extracted from catalogs, labels, packaging, and signage. Context is removed. Adjacency is reassigned. Authority increases in proportion to specificity, regardless of accuracy.
- **Protokollhäufung (Dossier Stack Condition)**
Records accumulate: maintenance notes, claims, timestamps. Gaps are preserved. Contradictions are not resolved. A sequence may appear, but closure is considered a filing error.
- **Randbemerkungsdift (False Commentator Condition)**
Functional texts (manuals, glossaries, guides) are annotated beyond their tolerance. Explanations become misaligned. Confidence is retained.
- **Anweisungsschnitt (Cut-Up Recorder Condition)**
Instruction-language is segmented and recombined. Repetition introduces rhythm. Meaning is reduced until only procedure-residue remains.

All outputs must retain **Rückverfolgbarkeit** (trace-feel): the impression that the fragment could be located again in some drawer, binder, or glove compartment.

Where this condition fails, the material is considered decorative and is removed.

A recurring sonic marker—transcribed provisionally as “**dor**”—is permitted to enter any layer. Its function remains under study.



THE STAFF (SINK-CUSTODIANS / FUNCTION-BEARERS)

- **Virgil Kay**: Final Arbiter. Currently engaged in the classification of falling bakery items under aerodynamic variance. Maintains decision authority, though criteria are mobile.

- **Silent Bill**: Overseer of Tactical Non-Sequiturs. Executes **Satzabbruchhandlung** (sentence-break action) by leaving mid-utterance. This is considered a valid editorial intervention.

- **Unkie Bob**: Assigned to Casual Entropy. No longer dismantles structures directly; instead applies insufficient fastening (**Lockerbefestigung**), allowing failure to emerge without announcement.

- **The Unnamed Dishwasher**: Not recorded in official listings. Present regardless. Performs continuous surface-restoration under high focus. Functions as **Kerntriebwerk** (core engine). Prolonged observation is discouraged.



THE PERPETUAL PENDING PLEDGE (STANDING CONDITION)

The Review is not offered for sale; it is made available.

All incoming funds are classified as **Zweckfreie Gaben** (non-instrumental offerings), directed not toward exchange but toward sustaining an ongoing condition designated Obsession8888.

The registry has been converted from numeric to vibrational notation:

Vi · ∞ · 432Hz

Field reports indicate this frequency may present not as tone but as mechanical rattle (loose shielding, low-end vibration). This is not considered deviation.

The 9-volt battery is dead. Its status remains in force.



SUBMISSION PROTOCOL

(PRACTICAL INTAKE / REPURPOSING PRIORITY)

1. **The Material**
Submit between 2 and 953 fragments. Acceptable forms include text, image, diagram, list, or overheard exchange (e.g., dispute regarding bowling technique). Each item must exhibit **Gebrauchsnähe** (proximity to use): it should resemble something that once functioned or was handled.
2. **The Accompanying Note**
Do not provide institutional histories or award listings. These do not transfer under current conditions.
Instead, supply one of the following:
 - A preferred industrial fastener
 - A tool of uncertain purpose
 - A sound indicating possible malfunction
3. **The Offering (Optional but Structurally Relevant)**
Submission remains free under the Perpetual

Pending Pledge.

However, contributors may include a 12-inch sandwich as a material supplement.

Kewpie Clause (Unrevoked):

Absence of Kewpie Mayonnaise results in immediate reassignment of submitted materials to cleaning or leveling functions.

Kewpie remains the only verified buffer against a system-wide condition provisionally termed the Absolute Cosmic-Cluck.

4. On Repurposing (Important Clarification)

All submitted materials enter a

Weiterverwendungskreis (cycle of further use).

Possible outcomes include:

- Inclusion as fragment within a larger construct
- Mislabeling and redistribution
- Use as structural support (physical or textual)
- Reduction to residue for future recombination

Authors retain attribution only in the loosest archival sense. Function supersedes origin.

5. Delivery

Materials may be delivered, transmitted, or misplaced. Retrieval is opportunistic. Loss is considered a form of delayed submission.



PARK AND RIDE (INGEST POINTS / KNOWN COORDINATES)

Digital: fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com

Physical: 250.50∞ State Street, Bangor, Maine, 04401

ERRATUM:

If the registered frequency resolves as a rattle rather than

a tone, no adjustment is required. The rattle is to be understood as a valid form of expression.

If a unit accepts value while returning the object, the transaction is considered complete.



PLACED ON THE SHELF
Date.....

"NON IGNORA MALI MISERIS
SUCCURRERE DISCO."

2, 1942 (Gandhi Jay)

— *Virgil, The Aeneid*



SRI VENKATESWAMA
CENTRAL LIBRARY &
RESEARCH CENTRE
Acc. No. 23168
Date.....
TIRUPATI.



THE LIVER SIGNS THE REMAINDER

By Echo Methyl

The bell on the pedal car does not ring so much as file a notice that ringing has already occurred, stamped in advance, and the officer—Eteocles, a redbone bloodhound with ears long as municipal memory, nose lowered into the seam between odor and ordinance—halts not because he sees the rats but because the halting has been logged in a system that does not agree on when movement began.

There they are: Gans upright on a mini e-bike, matte black, its headlight a narrow cone that insists on being called a spotlight; Ismene lower, almost devotional, gripping the sideboard of a skateboard as though clinging to a clause.

They braid into a single motion that cannot be itemized without remainder, gliding behind restaurants where milk crates accumulate like stackable alibis and the faint metallic tang of arsenic rises from the water table. Tonight there is something warmer, fried and insistent—the ghost-sweet scent of alcapurrias seeping from a paper sack abandoned without witness. The city pretends the water is clean, but the hidden liver of the alley metabolizes anyway, turning sharp inorganic arsenic into softer forms the kidneys will later release into runoff sliding between the crates.

The rats are not thieves. They are ASL slam poets mid-performance, their wheels composing visual rhyme: repeated handshapes of removal, facial grammar no ordinance can parse. One lifts the sack as if lifting a line break—the grease warm enough to mean the

difference between hunger and metaphor—spotting the night in constellations that refuse to be read as evidence.

UNIT: PEDAL 3
BELL: CONFIRMED
ZONE: TREE—SUBDIVIDED

The tags attach to nothing visible. Eteocles inhales stacked plastic, dairy long litigated into cleanliness, the sudden punctuation of plantain and meat. The crates present contradictory profiles—black lattice, red, blue—each marked **PROPERTY OF SOMEWHERE ELSE** in letters peeled and reapplied until ownership becomes suggestion.

Gans leans the e-bike into a silence louder than acceleration—eye contact unbroken, because in this choreography you do not break gaze without severing the poem. Ismene's

wheels whisper along the concrete.
Both execute a procedure that looks
like theft only if one insists on
sequence. Their bodies sign a
collective we that gathers what the
liver cannot fully clear.

“Already,” Gans says.

Ismene taps twice.

“Inside it,” she replies.

Eteocles produces a ticket that writes
itself slower than it is issued, graphite
lagging as if the sentence must be
earned.

**VIOLATION: PARKED IN A
FUTURE ZONE
OBJECT: CRATE (MILK / NON-
MILK)
RESPONSIBLE PARTY: MOBILE
FINE: PAYABLE PRIOR TO
OCCURRENCE**

“A hinge,” Ismene signs.

Gans turns the beam through the leaning NO LOITERING sign. It holds, then forgets itself.

LOG (time smudged):
REAR ACCESS—RESTAURANT
(UNSPECIFIED)
CRATE COUNT: 12 → 11 → 13
SIGNAGE: LEANING
ADDITIONAL OBJECT:
ALCAPURRIAS (1 → MANY →
NONE)
ACTION: REMOVAL
RESULT: INVENTORY INCREASE
(external) / GREASE TRACE

“There are laws no one points to,” Ismene signs. “They hold anyway.”

“Until they are seen holding,” Gans says.

Eteocles hesitates. The system does not.

They emerge from a municipal vent that has been repurposed so many times it no longer remembers whether it was for air or apology.

Sometimes they are billed as:

- The Pine State Pluckers & the Antenna Bugs
- Bixby & the Boiler-Room Boys
- The Lobster-Shed Laugh Track Quartet
- Uncle Crankshaft and His Almost-Orchestra

They are cockroaches.

They are a band because the infrastructure misfiled them under “entertainment that survives damp.”

CLACKWITZ (lead, antennae like tuning forks):

We interrupt your enforcement

to remind you that joy is still pending
approval

MIDGE:

I once submitted grief in triplicate
and they mailed it back folded into a
joke I didn't order

SPROCKET:

So we started playing inside the
margins
where instructions forget how to
behave

**MAIN NUMBER – “THE ROACHES’
VAUDEVILLE NONSENSE
MEDLEY (ROUTE 1 VERSION)”**

ALL:

*🎵 Clickity-clack, the system's off track,
we're five bugs deep in a paper sack 🎵*

CLACKWITZ:

I tried to get a permit for my sneeze

they said “too emotional, try the breeze”

MIDGE:

My uncle once filed his shoes for divorce
they left him for a government horse

SPROCKET:

We tuned a spoon into a minor complaint
and it cried out “I am legally quaint”

ALL:

*♪ Oh the bugs go skitter, the files go fritter,
the law takes a nap in a toaster of glitter ♪*

CLACKWITZ:

We danced in the margin of a parking fine
and turned it into a mildly suspicious sign

MIDGE:

The sign said “DON’T” but it winked

at us twice
so we taxed it gently in pickled advice

SPROCKET:

Now every complaint wears tap shoes
at noon
and sings to the moon in a slightly
wrong tune

ALL:

*Clickity-clack, we're the civic attack,
we pay our respects in a paper sack*

The alley does not laugh. It loosens its
posture.

Eteocles writes “audible irregularity”
and files it under weather.

THE FOURTH ONE (UNFILED):

We are what remains when procedure
forgets its dignity

CLACKWITZ:

They tried to archive us as noise

SPROCKET:

Noise kept showing up for work
anyway

MIDGE:

Milk crate sings like a corrected
apology
stacked three high and still disputing
gravity—

SPROCKET:

Each crate contains a slightly different
jurisdiction none of which agree on
hunger as admissible evidence—

CLACKWITZ:

We built a staircase out of leftover
paperwork and called it vertical
citizenship—

ALL:

*♪ Oh the crates, oh the crates, they wobble
and wait,
they argue with physics and lose to their
state ♪*

RETURN TO SYSTEM (NOW LESS CERTAIN OF ITSELF)

Ismene signs:

The unwritten laws persist without author.

Gans:

That is why they survive recognition.

Ismene:

And why recognition keeps misfiling them.

Eteocles writes nothing. The absence writes itself as pending authority.

Gans:

Abstract right makes objects of us.

Ismene:

Morality makes us endless internal commentary.

Gans:

But here—

Ismene:

—we are already inside what we call the good.

The alley does not resolve this. It circulates it like breath through cracked infrastructure.

CLACKWITZ:

We are not outside the system

SPROCKET:

We are the part that refuses to finalize

MIDGE:

And still gets mistaken for local weather phenomena

ALL:

 Clickity-clack, the world goes back,
we're just the hiccup in its bureaucratic snack



Crates exist as counted and missing.
Removal is recorded before initiation.
The bell rings in advance of itself.

Eteocles completes a form whose final field was already satisfied elsewhere.

The Pine State Pluckers & the Antenna Bugs continue performing inside the ventilation of municipal space, where policy becomes humidity and humidity becomes rhythm.

The alley exhales without authorization.

The water keeps flowing.

And ethical life—misfiled, overheard, already inhabited—continues as sound that refuses to resolve into record.



THE EMULSION CODEX OF BANGOR

*(or: a minor civic incident involving
laundry, ontology, and a poultry-related
furnishing)*

*By Mould. E. Signage (apocryphally
speaking)*

It began, as these things so often do in Bangor, with weather that had clearly lost its professional bearings. The rain did not fall so much as loiter—hovering in damp indecision, like a clerk who has misfiled the concept of precipitation and is too embarrassed to admit it.

The establishment in question—once a laundromat, now rebranded as The Civic Appliance Room with

Competing Jurisdictional Overlays—stood at the precise intersection of “Not Quite Here” and “We’ll Get Back to You.” Its neon sign flickered with the anxious literacy of a man trying to spell “existence” after anesthesia.

Inside, I was greeted by a rooster mask.

It was seated at the counter in the manner of something that had long ago decided not to participate in the narrative and was sticking to that resolution with admirable, if unsettling, consistency. It did not greet me. It did not fail to greet me. It simply withheld all opinion, like a government agency during audit season.

I waited, as one does in civilized society, for permission to continue existing in the room.

None was forthcoming.

The dryers, meanwhile, were already engaged in what can only be described as ideological rotation. A great cylindrical apparatus—known locally as “the Drum,” though this was like calling a small war “a disagreement”—turned with the calm assurance of something that had never once considered the possibility of error. It was less a machine than a thesis in motion.

A sock appeared inside it. Orange and blue. Argyle. Possibly remorseful.

It revolved once, then twice, then began to acquire administrative significance.

A nearby sign informed me:
UNRESOLVED TEXTILE ENTITY
7B.

I have always found that the phrase “unresolved textile entity” tends to dampen the spirit.

The sock, however, seemed indifferent. It had the air of something that had been through worse committees.

At this point, the rooster mask shifted slightly.

Not in acknowledgment.

More in the way a stone might reconsider gravity out of politeness. Then came the interruption.

It did not arrive through the speakers, which were busy pretending to be empty. It arrived as a correction to reality.

A man entered who was either not there at all or there in a way the

building had not been properly licensed to handle. He carried a guitar that seemed to have been issued under a different jurisdiction entirely. His suit shimmered faintly, as though woven from paperwork that had been left too long in sunlight.

He did not so much sing as *decline to break silence in a structured manner*. The effect was immediate.

The drum, sensing competition, attempted to assert its usual dominance, but found itself demoted—reluctantly—into accompaniment. One could almost hear it muttering under its breath about declining standards.

On the wall, in a handwriting that suggested either grease or theological fatigue, appeared the sentence:

This land I do not forget

It was unclear whether this was a confession, a threat, or a misfiled receipt.

The rooster mask remained unmoved by all of this, which in retrospect appears to have been its most radical contribution.

Then the ventilation system coughed. And the cockroaches arrived.

They were, according to surviving promotional material and one badly scorched newspaper clipping, variously known as:

The Pine State Pluckers & the Antenna Bugs

Bixby & the Boiler-Room Boys

The Lobster-Shed Laugh Track Quartet

Uncle Crankshaft and His Almost-Orchestra

In truth, they answered to none of these names unless the acoustics were favorable.

They poured out of a duct with the exhausted confidence of a troupe that had been booked continuously since 1937 and never once seen the contract. The lead roach—Clackwitz, if one is to trust the billing and not the evidence—cleared his throat in a way that suggested he had once been a radio personality and had not fully recovered.

“We interrupt this civic misunderstanding,” he said, “to remind you that joy remains technically admissible, pending review.”

Another, Midge, adjusted what might generously be called her posture.

“I submitted a feeling once,” she said, “and it came back labeled ‘insufficiently processed for human consumption.’”

A third, Sprocket, tapped a spoon against a crate.

“That’s how we started,” he added.

“Rejected filings and minor percussion.”

They then launched into what can only be described as a musical number, though “number” implies arithmetic and this was more of a civic suggestion.

*♪ Clickity-clack, the system’s off track,
we’re five small errors in a paper sack.
We filed our names in a government sneeze,
and got them returned with administrative
cheese. ♪*

The sock in the dryer spun faster, as if embarrassed to be associated with any of this.

The drum attempted to regain authority but discovered it had been reassigned as a metaphor.

The guitar man—if he was indeed a man, which was beginning to feel like an optimistic classification—continued not singing, which in this context was interpreted as a form of higher compliance.

At some point, a woman entered with a bottle of mayonnaise.

This detail, I am aware, tends to divide audiences.

She opened it with the calm of someone who has never expected the world to make sense and has therefore been spared disappointment.

“It is not a solution,” she said, “but it prevents premature separation.”

She applied it to a napkin and offered it to the rooster mask.

The mask, after a pause that could have been centuries or a faulty timer, did not accept it.
But the room did.

One must understand: in Bangor, acceptance is rarely voluntary. It tends to happen at the level of systems.
The dryers softened.

The sock became less accusatory.
Even the drum, briefly deprived of ideological certainty, fell into a more domestic rhythm, like a retired general discovering knitting.

The cockroaches, emboldened, continued their performance.

*♪ Oh clickity-clack, we've lost the map,
but we're still on payroll for the bureaucrat's*

nap.

*We tango with forms and we foxtrot fines,
and we pay our respects in overlapping lines.*



At this point, the rooster mask did something unprecedented.

It tilted.

Not in meaning.
Only in angle.

Which, in retrospect, may have been the most honest gesture in the entire establishment.

The lights flickered.

A sign outside briefly declared:

**OPEN / CLOSED / PENDING
CLARIFICATION**

Then the man with the guitar left without exiting.

Which is to say: he was no longer there, but the absence had not yet been processed.

The mayonnaise woman closed the jar. "That should hold," she said, though nothing in particular had been fixed. The sock stopped spinning.

It appeared, for the first time, undecided.

I paid for nothing with a quarter I did not remember acquiring.

And stepped outside into the Bangor weather, which had resumed its policy of unresolved drizzle.

Behind me, the Civic Appliance Room continued operating as if continuity

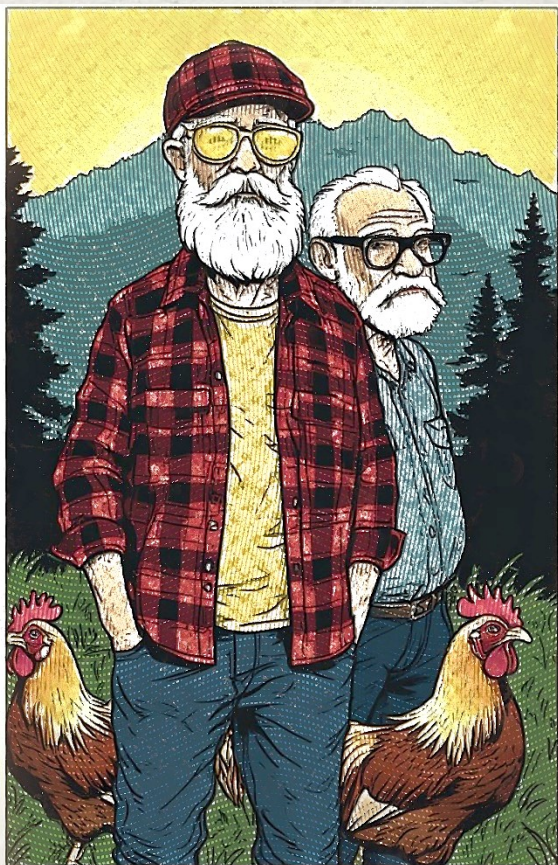
were a suggestion rather than a requirement.

The rooster mask remained on duty.
The drum continued its mild philosophical disagreement with gravity.

And somewhere inside, the cockroaches were still singing, not because anyone had authorized it, but because no system had yet found a way to stop them without also stopping everything else.

Which, in Bangor, is generally considered bad form.





THE RING THAT DOES NOT CLOSE

(Or: Eight Hens, Two Load-
Bearing Words, And A Beach
Ball on Whaleback)

By Zinemeister of the
Tree Streets, Edited by No
One Who Admits They Edited
Anything



It was in the small hours—shortly
after three—when the membrane

between 1870 and the present goes slack and lets the air through.

That is when I found One Size at the intersection of Pine and State in Bangor, stationed like a punctuation mark that refuses to be period. He stood beside a Mitsubishi Mirage of indeterminate silver, idling with the weary respiration of a living creature: a vibration like a loose tooth chattering in an elderly skull—not a defect, he insisted, but a sonic signature, the audible proof that the machine had stopped pretending to be reliable and started acting like a mobile palimpsest.

On the dashboard, a frowning Donald Duck watched over a parliament of rubber ducks, bobbing in the heater's thermal currents like a Greek chorus confirming the absolute certainty of everything falling apart. Along the

flank, the script read Chiwit Pai Rueai, Life Goes On, which didn't mean gentle forward motion so much as the unstoppable viscous flow of consequence toward the sea.

Above us all, Paul Bunyan watched with carved vacant eyes—vacant in the way monuments are vacant: not empty, just not available for conclusions.

One Size did not pack. He assembled.

On the passenger seat sat a valise that had survived Elias at Ellis Island, Harlan Sr. in the Depression, a house fire in 1972 that no one remembered for the flames but everyone remembered for the procedures after, scorched but structurally intact—hinges groaning under silk cravats dyed in allegiances no longer operational. In it, a pocket watch engraved with riddles that answered differently depending on the

hour. And a manuscript he called a grimoire, marked with notes on the nature of place: that Bangor was less a municipality than a logistics problem that achieved consciousness, and that the Tree Streets were named for what had been cleared to make way for pavement—memory performed as erasure.

From the radio, the first voice came like a dream not yet remembered: the road defeats no one. it only records the attempt.

Then the call arrived—from his sister—voice flat as a field report.

“He fell. Broke some ribs. He’s okay. He’s not okay. He’s in Hartland.”

“Four Corners.”

“Four Corners.”

And so the drive began, not as a decision, but as a metabolism. The body produces it the way a printer produces copies: gears turning because gears are designed to turn.

I rode along as witness, document, interference pattern—the condition of companionship when two frequencies share a channel and neither resolves into harmony.



**FIRST STRATUM: BANGOR →
AUGUSTA (THE RIVER AS
RECEIPT)**

The city released us the way a system releases a variable: without comment, without ceremony, with the faint expectation we'd need it again later.

Main Street. Paul Bunyan. The Penobscot appearing and disappearing on the left like a sentence that keeps losing its verb.

We did not travel fast. We moved at the speed of attention—slow enough that the road could do its work of registering presence without demanding we understand it.

In the glove compartment, One Size kept what he called an operational archive:

- **MARKED:** receipts, wrappers, the ghost of noodle dish, the Donald Duck affixed with adhesive the manufacturer hadn't expected to secure a plastic deity to a Japanese automobile in an American cosmology of despair and persistence.

- **UNMARKED:** rubber ducks, bobbing insistently—structurally necessary in the same way certain New England words are structurally necessary: butter, later, used to, and still (the most dangerous word in the English language because it contains both continuity and surprise and will not say which one it means).

The Speak & Spell on the passenger seat murmured hexadecimal endearments to the dark, then spelled D-E-P-A-R-T-U-R-E like it was confessing.

One Size watched the road as if the road were the only witness whose testimony counted in the court of continuation.



SECOND STRATUM: WATERVILLE → SKOWHEGAN (THE SENTENCES INCOMPATIBLE WITH EACH OTHER)

Hills accrued with the slow insistence of a system introducing friction and refusing to justify it.

In that stretch, the drive ceased being transportation and became simultaneous occupancy:

- the child learning grocery-aisle grammar,
- the adolescent inheriting land as absence,
- the working adult moving through the same corridors as employment rather than curiosity,
- the returning witness discovering nothing has changed except their capacity to recognize repetition.

The Mirage held them all without acknowledging any of them, which is what compression does when it refuses to become a conclusion.

One Size said, "Stop."

I stopped.

He said, "Not you. The sentence."



THIRD STRATUM: ELIOT, MAINE
→ A DESCENT INTO ARCHEOLOGY
(THE RELIC THAT ISN'T IRONIC)

On earlier drives he'd stopped in Eliot.

Today we passed through it verbally
the way rivers pass through places: by
circulating rather than storing.

He spoke of the gas station that had been a general store, before that a stagecoach stop, before that a clearing where someone tried to build a church until the foundation sank into the marsh. The clerk—always the clerk—would have the weary patience of someone who has heard every joke about the winter twice and is prepared to hear them again.

We didn't stop, but I heard the details anyway, as if speech were the road's secondary layer.

Neon buzzing like a dying insect. Floorboards creaking in the shape of a cross. A place where people come to leave or to be left.

He called the cherry pie crust a relic without irony.

That word landed on structural authority, like a keystone placed where everything else was already leaning.



FOURTH STRATUM: EXETER → THE HONOR SYSTEM FARM STAND (AND THE DADA PURCHASE OF RETIRED HENS)

By Exeter, the donut spare began wobbling—an irregular rhythm that matched the road's rises and falls, as if the vehicle had synchronized degradation with terrain. A SCHLORP of rubber on asphalt: truth beneath polite history.

We pulled into a roadside stand operating on an honor system so old it didn't require enforcement, only accumulation.

Apples bruised. Zucchini swollen like small children.

He took one. Left five dollars. Left a note for the next traveler—his handwriting shrinking, practicing discretion.

CONTINUITY DOES NOT REQUIRE INTACTNESS.

—OS, Tree Streets, Bangor. (The donut spare agrees).

Then the Dada began.

In a corner of the stand—half-hidden behind feed sacks and a notice about winterizing—there was a coop. Lay hens. Aged out. Being cleared. One Size didn't negotiate. He selected the evidence.

He bought eight lay hens, because
eight is a number that likes to become
a structure.

And those hens—each one stubbornly
literate—began writing haikus on
whatever paper was available: receipt
backs, torn ledger scraps, the blank
margins of the grimoire that still
refused to stay blank.

Eight hens. Eight haikus.

HEN-HAIKUS (8)

1. Pine Streets—inked dust
in glove compartments
humming
without a witness.
2. River digests salt
the continental shelf's
paperwork
back into weather.

3. Father's broken ribs
load-bearing question marks
keep holding anyway.
4. Peach in my hand
tiny edible planet
that remembers me.
5. Four-way stop waits
choices made from necessity—
not from rightness.
6. Chairs know breaches
of pattern the way floors do
when you walk on them.
7. Hens peck time slow
still, later, used to—three words
refusing to decide.
8. Road defeats no one
only records the attempt—
then keeps going.

One Size watched the hens write as if
it were a kind of accounting.
I watched the hens write as if it were a
kind of argument.

We left with the birds in a crate
balanced like a sentence that might
still finish.



FIFTH STRATUM: PORTSMOUTH → THE CURATED PAST (THE BUTTER WORD)

In Portsmouth, the past was curated—
committee-designed by ghosts and
real estate agents who agreed on
atmosphere if not on meaning.

Stores sold the idea of products:
candles smelling of nostalgia. Books
displayed beside mugs declaring
affection for the state.

One Size ate toast that was stale but
butter that was not.

He said, “Butter is load-bearing. Along with later, used to, and still.”

He left a tip and a zine copy on the table. The waitress absorbed it like grease from a griddle—processing inputs without evaluation.

The zine migrated anyway, from table to counter to shelf to pocket, and somewhere it would land in the hands of a busboy who would read a sentence that weighed more than it explained:
THE RIVER IS A RECEIPT YOU
CAN'T RETURN.



SIXTH STRATUM: SOUTH → VERMONT (THE HILLS ARGUE IN REGISTER)

As we crossed the river at the interval
between commitment and

consequence, Vermont accepted the Mirage without comment.

Vermont narrows roads until they become negotiations, until straight-line dominion is forced to step aside and let the curve speak.

The hills closed around the route like an argument finding its register: lower, slower, more insistent.

The notebook remained open on the passenger seat, but not writing yet. Accumulating material the way timber is extracted: violence producing usefulness from whole.

We approached arrival as if it were simply another frequency entering range.



ARRIVAL: HARTLAND FOUR CORNERS (THE PORCH THAT SAGGED LIKE A MAN WHO GAVE UP POSTURE)

Hartland Four Corners is a coordinate more than a town: four roads meet and then diverge again, each carrying its portion of agreement into a different quadrant of landscape.

His father's house was squat white clapboard with a porch sagging in the middle like a man who had given up on posture not from laziness but from decades of weight and decades of calculating that expenditure exceeds return.

Inside—woodsmoke, old coffee in the walls, the ghost of the noodle dish from the car.

Photographs lined the house like evidence:

- Elias at Ellis Island with the riddle-watch and inoperable allegiances.
- Harlan Sr. in a breadline that resembled allegory.
- A woman at an easel painting structural deterioration of the shoreline with a brush made of dried fern.

On the porch sat the man with broken ribs, whittling a piece of wood into something that may or may not be a bird.

He didn't look up.

"You're late," he said.

"I took the scenic route."

"There's no such thing. There's just the route, and the stories you tell yourself to make it bearable."

They did not embrace. The air already saturated itself with sawdust and static and an unspoken family protocol:

Some acknowledgments require no gestures—only the continued functioning of objects.

And now the hens arrived too: eight retired layers, staring at the porch as if evaluating whether it was load-bearing.



THE WHALEBACK INTERLUDE: BEACH BALLS AT THE SUMMIT WHILE NICK CAVE REMINDS THE WORLD IT HAS TEETH

Somewhere between “the day is too thick to hold” and “tomorrow will still be tomorrow,” the narrative broke into a ridiculous, necessary shape.

One Size, his father, and the chickens went to Whaleback Mountain—look it up if you need proof that mountains exist even when stories insist on being impossible.

At the top, wind combed the world into strips.

On the ground: beach balls—bright, absurd, spherical compromises.

The car radio was turned up until the air felt bruised. Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds blared “Red Right Hand”—and the chorus punctured everything with the line:

There’s a red right hand.

The hens kicked beach balls the way punctuation kicks thought.

The father laughed without changing his posture.

One Size kicked harder, because he believed violence should be redirected into play whenever possible.

Beach balls arced and returned, refusing finality like a lesson the sky could only teach by repetition.

They kicked until the balls softened into laughter and the wind turned the whole summit into a version of the same argument: continuation without resolution, motion without closure, ring-shaped insistence that refuses to become a circle.

The chickens pecked at the radio speaker grill like critics.

Then they settled, satisfied, as if they'd done their contribution to the method.



INTERVAL: TWO DAYS (REDIRECTING FLOW SO IT DOESN'T BREAK THINGS)

Two days passed.

One Size fixed a gutter that had been directing water toward the foundation instead of away from it—redirecting flow, the same function he performed with the zine: rerouting damage into a path where it could be absorbed without structural consequence.

He drove to the general store in Hartland and bought supplies.

He sat on the porch late afternoon while light apologized for leaving.

His father whittled.

Silence between them wasn't emptiness; it was the highest form of it: the Chavruta Loop—dispute

suspended not because it was resolved, but because the question was too load-bearing for the day's structural integrity.

“How bad,” One Size had asked that first morning.

“Three. Maybe four. They said three.”

We did not discuss the Choreography of the Slurry.

We did not discuss the manila folders.

We did not discuss the tutu, or Carl (efficiency personified), or Carl's voice proposing endings like deadlines.

We discussed kale.
The kale did well.



DEPARTURE: THE PEACH (A STORY DECIDES IF IT WILL EAT)

On the morning he prepared to leave, his father handed him a paper bag: blueberry jam from last summer, pocketknife worn smooth, and a single perfectly ripe peach.

A cash-only obligation wrapped in normal firmness.

He did not open the bag until he was back in the Mirage idling at the four-way stop—the coordinate, the crossroads, the place where four roads diverge and each one carries its portion into a different quadrant. He bit into the peach.

Juice ran down his chin tasting of summer and childhood and the exact moment a story becomes memory or myth.

The Mirage coughed and sputtered
before catching.

Radio crackled with a voice from the
dream he would not remember until
next time:

The road defeats no one. It only
records the attempt.



RETURN: THE RING THAT
DOESN'T CLOSE (BECAUSE THE
RING IS A METHOD, NOT A
SHAPE)

On the way back, it wasn't repetition.
Reversal is inversion.

The farms oriented again. The stores
argued again. The fields insisted again.
But the arguments came in a different
order and suggested a different

conclusion—then corrected itself back to the original conclusion:

There is no conclusion, only continuation.

The donut spare wobbled like a loyal refusal to quit.

The notebook accumulated material for the next extraction.

History had already eaten and was asking, quietly, for seconds.



MOTEL OUTSIDE LEBANON: PURIFICATION (BREAD, FILTERS, AND THE RABBIT'S LIVER OF SACRIFICED EXCESS)

That night, in a motel outside Lebanon, he performed purification the way ritual does what procedure cannot: it eliminates excess, it keeps only the essential.

He kneaded a loaf of bread with bare feet, pressing overthinking's ouroboros into something porous enough to absorb it.

He fed it through coffee filters woven from sustainable fibers, catching pretension and letting essence pass.

Then—rabbit's liver, procured from sources he declined to specify—into which impurities were rubbed until the story's remaining residue drained

away into earth and night and silence
that wasn't quiet but thick.

He ate. He drank.

The Speak & Spell murmured one final
observation as if it were an inscription
on a filing cabinet no one asked
permission to open:
S-T-I-L-L.
Still.

The most dangerous word in the
English language.
Because it contains continuity and
surprise and never declares which it
means.



CODA: BANGOR AGAIN, OR SOMETHING LIKE IT

By the time the Mirage pulled onto Pine Street again, Bangor felt less like a destination than an archive asking for seconds.

One Size parked.

The ring did not close.

Because the ring was never going to be a ring.

A ring that doesn't close is not failure.

It's function: openness as design.

Paul Bunyan drew no conclusions.

The saw was always running.

The river was always rising.

The road defeats no one.

It only records the attempt.

And somewhere in the crate of retired hens—somewhere between beak marks and careful ink—those eight haikus

continued writing themselves into the margins of a journey that would not explain itself, because explanation is often just another form of closure.

M-Z: These are not written yet. They will not explain themselves. They will function.

End of Transmission. Frequency unstable.





WITNESS POST

**PLEASE DO
NOT DISTURB
NEARBY**

**SURVEY
MARKER**

**FOR INFORMATION WRITE TO
THE DIRECTOR
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WASHINGTON D.C. 20230**



THE TREE STREETS TRIFLE, OR:
THE LOWER GRAMMAR OF
BANGOR

*By Eliot Marrow, Keeper of
Subterranean Registers*

Nothing is where it appears.
The street is not the street.
It is the spacing between what is
permitted to be seen.
Under the Tree Streets, the grammar
withdraws.
A house is not a house
but a hesitation in material form
where something once decided to
remain unspoken.
White space is load-bearing.
The sidewalk does not connect
points—
it interrupts them at regular intervals

so that meaning does not collapse too
quickly into certainty.

Even the air is distributed unevenly
here,
as if punctuation had fallen into the
ground
and continued its work underground.
What is missing is structural.



The streets arrange themselves as if
drawn by a hand that never lifts.

A roof is a line.

A road is a sentence that forgot its
verb.

A window repeats itself downward
like a measurement.

Everything is legible if you stop
reading it as narrative.

The Tree Streets become a diagram of
movement:

northward breath, eastward habit,
southward return.

Even fences participate in syntax.

A mailbox is a punctuation mark that
expects arrival.

A porch is an indentation in the
paragraph of geography.

If you tilt your perception,
the whole district becomes a
calligram of itself—
not spoken, but seen as thought
arranged in space.



Lord, the streets rise and fall like
breath under winter light.
What is broken is not lost but bent
toward return.
The trees remember more than they
carry.
Their branches learn the shape of
absence
and still insist on lifting upward.
Every step is a small confession of
weight.

The houses lean toward each other
as if prayer were architectural
necessity.
Give us this day the ordinary pressure
of weather,
that we may understand how softness
survives exposure.
What is low is not lesser.
What bends is not defeated.
The street holds its form by yielding.



DEDICATED TO
CUSTOMERS AND
COMMUNITY.

THE PEOPLE
BEFORE PROFIT.



Demoulas
MARKET BASKET

"MORE FOR YOUR DOLLAR"



STRONG ROOTS.
BRIGHT FUTURE.
TOGETHER.

DEMOULAS MARKET BASKET:
OUR FAMILY SERVING YOURS.

**DEMOULAS MARKET BASKET / WITNESS
POST / FAUST / EAST GDR CULTURAL
SUPPLEMENT:
FIELD REPORT FROM THE SQUIRREL
LEDGER OF KYLE
"LOW PRICES. HIGHER METAPHYSICS.
KYLE IS WATCHING."**

and the sign, the sign first, because everything begins with a sign pretending it is not a door—

a wooden stake in American soil, banal as breath, but already trembling with jurisdictional anxiety, already whispering in bureaucratic weather:

WITNESS POST

which is not a witness in the human sense but a witness in the sense of coordinates refusing to forget themselves.

and somewhere just beneath it, buried like a secret that never learned to stay secret, the metal disc, the geometry of ownership, the

quiet mathematics of “this is yours” and “this is not yours” and “please do not disturb reality while it is measuring itself.”

A squirrel named Kyle in a maroon polyester blazer—slightly too small in the shoulders, as if stitched by optimism rather than fabric—leans in, squints, takes notes on a clipboard that says:

DEMOULAS MARKET BASKET FIELD SURVEY
DIVISION: PRICE STABILITY UNIT

Kyle does not understand NOAA. Kyle understands only aisle geometry and existential markdowns.

“INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IN AISLE 7:
MEYER-BÄR SINGS AGAIN”

now the paper shifts.

not paper in the innocent sense, but paper as ideology folded until it becomes architecture.

East German pages, 1950s ink still refusing to dry, speaking in the tone of a world that believes culture is a construction site with better lighting.

and here, inexplicably but also inevitably, the ensemble appears:

squirrels again—always squirrels now—named Kyle, all of them Kyle, as if individuality collapsed but uniforms survived.

they stand in formation inside a Market Basket frozen food aisle that has become, without permission, a choral hall of planned economics.

their maroon blazers form a single continuous red thought.

accordion noises leak from somewhere near the peas.

one Kyle—possibly the same Kyle, possibly all Kyles simultaneously—announces:

"WE HAVE BEEN INVITED TO VIENNA BY THE COMMITTEE OF BULK DISCOUNT REALITY."

another Kyle corrects him:

"NOT VIENNA. AISLE VIENNA. LOWER SHELF, EUROPEAN IMPORTS."

and the text itself, the old socialist cultural report, rewrites itself in fluorescent lighting:

international solidarity becomes loyalty points
folk music becomes weekly circular pricing
the planned economy becomes a shelf
restocking algorithm with feelings it refuses to
disclose

and Ruth Domke, now a squirrel named Kyle
wearing the accordion like a second ribcage,
passes her exams in the language of canned
beans.

"FAUST REDUCED TO TWO FOR ONE:
MEPHISTO WORKS PART TIME IN PRODUCE"

now the stage collapses into itself.

Goethe's theater does not vanish—it is merely
placed on sale.

Ernst Busch appears, or the idea of him appears,
or the performance residue of him appears,
projected onto a grocery cart that has learned
Latin.

Mephistopheles enters not as devil but as
assistant manager.

his smile is laminated.

his contract is renewable.

and the student—young, trembling,
epistemologically overextended—approaches
the Customer Service Desk of Fate.

Mephisto says:

“my dear customer, I advise you therefore: first,
review our logic-based savings program.”

and the student says:

“I would almost like to study theology now.”

and Mephisto, aside, scanning a barcode that
may or may not be existence itself:

“I would not wish to lead you astray. we are
currently out of astray. substitute available in
aisle 3.”

and in the margin of the script, written in red ink
that smells faintly of apples and regulation:

ERITIS SIKUT KYLE, SCIENTES BONUM ET
MALUM—

YOU SHALL BE LIKE KYLE, KNOWING WHAT IS
ON SALE AND WHAT IS NOT YET ON SALE

"THE WITNESS POST INCIDENT: A PRICE CHECK
ON REALITY ITSELF"

the survey marker returns.

it always returns.

Kyle #1 (or possibly Kyle Prime) attempts to
reconcile the coordinates of land ownership
with the coordinates of bulk cereal pricing.

fails.

tries again.

fails better.

the Witness Post, indifferent, continues to
witness without enthusiasm.

the earth does not sign receipts.

the squirrels do.

and somewhere in the bureaucratic underside of the scene, a memo circulates:

ALL MARKERS MUST BE RESPECTED
ALL MEANING MUST BE SHELVED PROPERLY
FAILURE TO COMPLY WILL RESULT IN
TEMPORAL DISCOUNTING

"DEMOULAS WEEKLY CIRCULAR FOR THE SOUL
(SPECIAL EDITION)"

THIS WEEK ONLY:

PLANNED ECONOMIES, BUY ONE GET ONE
METAPHYSICAL

FAUSTIAN BARGAINS, NOW WITH EXTRA
REDEMPTION COUPON

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, REDUCED TO
CLEARANCE AISLE

SURVEY MARKERS, NOW INSTALLING
THEMSELVES

ALL KYLE MODELS 30% OFF BUT IDENTICAL IN
EVERY IMPORTANT WAY

and finally, the image does not end, it only reorganizes:

a witness post in American soil
a socialist choir in East German ink
a devil in academic costume
a student unsure whether knowledge is a
blessing or a bulk discount
and a population of squirrels named Kyle
wearing maroon blazers, tying the entire
apparatus together with clipboard logic and
quiet panic

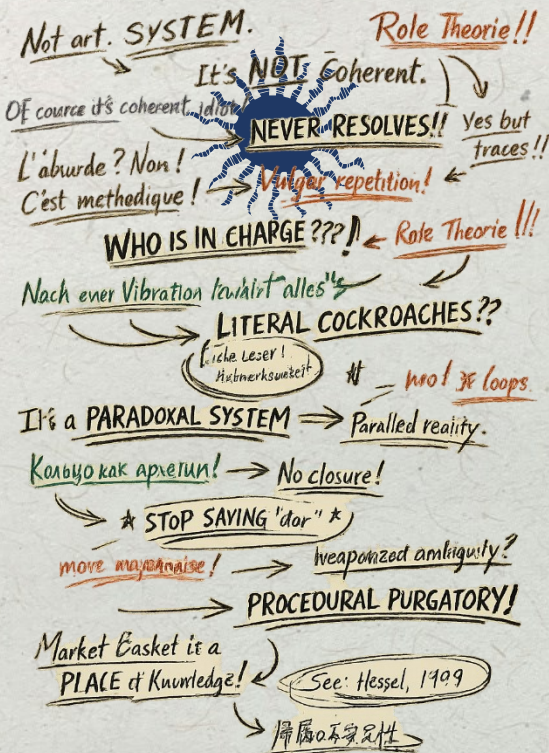
all of it moving through the fluorescent hum of
a grocery store that believes it is merely a
grocery store

when in fact it is:

a courtroom
a stage
a survey grid
a theological argument
and a weekly flyer refusing to admit it is
scripture

and Kyle writes, at the bottom, in careful block
letters:

LOW PRICES. HIGHER TRUTH. PLEASE RETURN
CARTS TO THEIR DESIGNATED METAPHYSICAL
LOCATION.



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BREVIARI MISTICI - N. 10

AUTHORIZED WHILE LEGIBLE

— KLEAN FITCH

THERMAL UNIT, FOWL FEATHERED REVIEW

